Maryland Council on Open Data

Meeting Agenda
December 15, 2017
10AM - Noon
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032

Introductions and Opening Remarks

- Mike Leahy, Acting Secretary of the Department of Information Technology and Chair of the Maryland Council on Open Data, welcomed everyone to the Maryland Council on Open Data meeting. He noted the quorum was not met; however, this meeting will be productive in the sense of talking about matters and making suggestions on how to engage more participation in future meetings.
- Patrick McLoughlin provided an overview of the meeting agenda and noted the addition of a workgroup breakout session for the second half of the meeting.
- Introductions around the room.

Council on Open Data – 2017 Annual Report Review

A. Overview
    a. The Council must provide a report covering the events over the last year.
B. Status of Open Data in Maryland
    a. Demand for open data is growing. Customers, constituents, and businesses are looking for more valuable data and want it made available to them.
C. Portal Statistics
    a. Patrick McLoughlin provided an overview of Open Data Portal and MD iMAP most popular search terms, datasets, and downloads.
    b. Noted though successful in some aspects, issues persist. Also, some people are not showing up as registered even though they are registered.
    c. Content on the MD iMAP Open Data Portal and the Open Data Portal overlap.
    d. Trying to figure out how to measure data requests and understand what people are looking for.
D. Visualization Examples
    a. Patrick McLoughlin provided various examples of how multiple datasets can be combined into a single visual resource (map, table, etc.). He provided examples from Maryland agencies and noted how there are many options to interact with the data.
E. Summary 2017
    a. Data Guidance and Standards
        i. Standards were developed on how to add and maintain data on the open data portals.
        ii. Work sessions were held throughout 2017 to demonstrate workflow for creating datasets and maintaining data on the open data portals.
        iii. Working to determine ownership of data so agencies are not relying on the Governor's Office of Performance Improvement (GOPI) or the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to make and/or request updates.
            1. Mike Morello, GOPI Director and Council Vice-Chair, stated the plan is to establish data governance internally within agencies and look at interoperability of datasets.

Additional guidance will be needed to put specifics on how we handle data governance.

2. Pat McLoughlin noted there has been improvement in shifting the data ownership to agencies.

  b. Data Maintenance
    i. A goal of 2017 has been to improve timeliness of data updates on the open data portals.
    ii. Looking to establish timelines of when the data should be updated and then create workflows to make sure those goals are being met.
    iii. At the end of 2016 there were 190 datasets that had not been updated according to their established maintenance timeframe. Through DoIT and GOPI initiatives, the number has dropped down to fewer than 20 datasets.
  c. Data Interoperability
    i. Throughout 2017, users have been coached on how to interact and leverage data on the open data portals.
    ii. Webinars have been used to coach users and disseminate information.
    iii. Ways to interact with data: built-in visualizations (maps, charts, graphs, etc.) or through third party analytics and visualization software.
  d. Workgroup Development
    i. Pat McLoughin provided an overview of the two workgroups: Administrative and Management & Outreach and Training.

Workgroup Updates

A. Administrative and Management
  a. Develop guidelines of governance that extend beyond statutory specifications.
  b. Convey information to the Chair and Vice Chair.
  c. Search, select and support application submissions for Council appointees for the term starting July 2018 (5 in total)

B. Training and Outreach
  a. Draft communications to increase participation in and awareness about Maryland open data.
  b. Develop ways to increase executive, legislative and judicial branch participation, as well as local entity participation in Maryland open data.
  c. Connect with other agencies and institutions to inform them of ways to utilize the open data portals.
  d. Identify how open data is being received by public – streamlined? transparent? accurate?
  e. 2017 activities included
    i. Speaking at the Maryland Association of Counties Annual Conference
    ii. Promoting open data through MD's University system
    iii. Collaborating with US Census Bureau and National Governor's Association
    iv. Participating in research with PEW Charitable Trusts
    v. Participating in the Socrata Connect National Open Data Forum

C. Hack-a-thon
  a. Mike Morello began a discussion regarding the idea of participating/ hosting a Hack-a-thon.
    i. The idea would be to bring students in and see what information they can pull from an existing dataset. It helps expose flaws in the system so they can be fixed and provides ideas on how the data can be used.
    ii. Goal: community engagement

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Mike Leahy noted, if we host an event, we must be exact in our language regarding who we want to engage and what outcomes we are looking for through this exercise.
Question: How long should the event be?
Response: Some prior events have lasted one day. Some have lasted overnight. University of Maryland hosts overnight events. One day events have the drawback of who is available on that given day? Virtual may be the way to go. Money prize will increase participation.
Mike Morello highlighted some agencies that might have datasets suitable for the event including DNR.
Goals for 2018:

Centralize data
Hack-a-thon
More communication throughout the year
Fine-tune guidelines

Workgroup Session Discussion

A. Does open data make a difference?
   a. Not having to manually fulfill PIA requests.
   b. Spurs innovation
   c. Suggestion: implement random survey to find out the types of people that are using the open data portals, the reason for needing the data, etc.
B. What is the Council's role?
   a. Same conversation happens over and over, but no power to implement change.
   b. Suggest change in legislation to give Council more authority to create policies and oversee them.
   c. Start identifying priorities in order to accomplish initiatives and goals.
   d. Need to identify the role of the Council before establishing voting procedures.
   e. Should the Council be passing rules for agencies to follow or leave that to GOPI and DoIT?
C. What process should the Council follow to suggest/recommend changes to legislation?
   a. Group should provide recommendations to the Chair. Then he can pass them further along.
   b. If a member cannot attend, the CIO or other senior management staff member shall be the designee.
   c. Designees must be clear if they are giving their opinion or speaking on behalf of the member.
   d. Voting topics need to go out prior to the meeting so members can consider or designees can discuss with the member and come to the meeting prepared.
   e. Overall, there is very little that actually gets voted on.
   f. Suggestion: use electronic medium to come to consensus between meetings.
   g. Suggestion: designee takes recommendations back to the member for discussion at the following meeting.

Open Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting
March 16, 2018
10AM – Noon
100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD
Conference Room, 1st Floor